



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



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**CITY OF CHICAGO INFORMS RESIDENTS OF NEW LAWS COMING INTO EFFECT IN 2020**

*New local laws and regulations seeking to ensure safety amid cannabis legalization, address congestion, support working families and bring greater fiscal stability to the City*

CHICAGO—Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot, along with various City Departments and agencies, is informing Chicago residents, workers and visitors of major new local laws and regulations that will come into effect in 2020. These new laws include: regulations for ensuring safe and responsible implementation of adult-use cannabis; first steps to address Chicago's downtown congestion; the implementation of important protections for Chicago's workers; process improvements to support small business owners; and more.

"Taken together, our new laws and regulations will foster equity, address entrenched issues that affect all Chicagoans, provide support to the most vulnerable and sustain long-term fiscal responsibility," said Mayor Lightfoot. "All Chicagoans should know that their City government is working hard to develop policies that prioritize equity, transparency and quality of life. These laws affect everyone from workers and small businesses to travelers and restaurant-goers, and we want to make sure everyone is aware."

The following new laws will come into effect in 2020:

**Legalization of Adult Use Cannabis**

Starting January 1, 2020, adult-use cannabis will be legal throughout the State of Illinois. Recreational cannabis will be available for purchase by individuals 21 years of age and older at State-licensed dispensaries, with [zoning requirements](#) in place to ensure equal distribution of dispensaries across the City. With the legalization of cannabis, Mayor Lightfoot has reformed [Chicago's enforcement policies](#) to ensure public safety while reducing penalties and fines, decriminalizing unlawful possession and [assuring the public](#) that using cannabis in their own private backyard or balcony will not lead to a ticket. Mayor Lightfoot has also launched the [Cannabis Facts Chicago](#) program to provide cannabis health and safety tips for all Chicagoans and has proposed a [Cannabis Consumption License](#) to allow for safe, designated consumption sites. Additionally, the passage of the Cannabis Retailers' Occupation Tax ordinance, which will impose a 3 percent tax on all cannabis retailers in the City, will go into effect on January 1.

"As we prepare for legalization next year, all 13,000 of Chicago's police officers are being trained on smart, sensible and safe cannabis regulations," said Interim Chicago Police



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Department Superintendent Charlie Beck. “Taken as a whole, our regulations prioritize the public safety of all residents in this City while ensuring communities that were once victims of unfair and unequal targeted cannabis enforcement can now economically thrive from its legalization.”

### **Congestion Tax**

To address rampant congestion downtown and encourage sustainable shared rides throughout the City, Mayor Lightfoot’s [landmark congestion tax](#) will go into effect in 2020. This new tax structure will address the [significant role played by the growth of ride-hailing services](#) in the congestion plaguing Chicago. Beginning on January 6<sup>th</sup>, the tax for all trips on Transportation Network Providers (Uber, Lyft or Via) will change, from \$0.72 per trip to \$1.25 for a single trip and \$0.65 for a shared trip. Trips in the [downtown area](#) during weekdays from 6:00 am to 10:00 pm, when other transportation options are plentiful, will see an additional downtown surcharge of \$1.75 per trip for single rides and \$0.60 per trip for shared rides.

As part of the City’s congestion plan, Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle (WAV) trips will see a reduction in tax from \$0.62 to \$0.55 for each trip. The tax will also provide relief for rideshare passengers on the City’s South and West sides, where 9 out of every ten trips are anticipated to qualify for the discounted shared rates and the exemption from the downtown trip surcharge.

“The new ground transportation tax structure is a good first step toward tackling the challenge of downtown traffic congestion,” said Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) Commissioner Gia Biagi. “Part of the revenue will go right back into improving our public transportation system by investing in the Bus Priority Zone Program, which will make bus service faster and more reliable.”

### **Restaurant Tax**

Beginning in January 2020, the City will impose a modest restaurant tax increase on all food and beverages sold at retail establishments, putting Chicago on par with neighboring cities. The current tax of .25% will increase by an additional .25% to .50%. The increase will put Chicago on par with or below the restaurant tax assessed at neighboring suburbs, and is expected to generate an additional \$20 million in 2020 and on an ongoing annual basis. The amended tax rate reflects the first increase since the tax was implemented in 2004.

### **Parking Meters**

Also beginning on January 1, new parking meter fees will be enacted following City Council approval earlier this year. The new fee rate structure will call for a 50 cent increase in the downtown area, as well as changes in the West Loop including the installation of new parking meters and a rate increase from \$2 per hour to \$4.50 per hour to align with rates throughout the downtown area. These increases are consistent with the Congestion Tax Zone for ride-hailing fees and are designed to reduce “true up” obligations to the parking meter operator. Chicago has a public-private partnership with Chicago Parking Meters to operate and maintain street metered parking pay stations for the City’s 36,000 metered parking spaces. Using a free cellphone app, motorists can access more information on



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where parking meters are in place and conveniently pay for parking using their smartphone. Parking meter rates were last raised in 2013.

### **Fast Track Signs**

Starting March 1, 2020, the [Fast-Track Business Sign Program](#) will remove barriers to obtaining a sign permit by allowing businesses to apply for a basic on-premise sign at the same time as their business license. This will eliminate a complicated procedure and expedite the process for business owners to obtain certain sign permits from several months to the day they get a business license.

### **Utility Billing Relief Pilot Program**

The new Utility Billing Relief Pilot Program will launch on April 1, 2020, offering owners of a single family or two-unit residents who are eligible to participate in the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) to reduce the cost of water and sewer service, and to pay off any outstanding debt in an affordable way. While enrolled in the program, participants are exempt from having their water shut off, as well as the assessment of additional penalties and interest, or referral for debt collection, on any past due charges incurred before entering the program. A participant who pays all reduced rate bills while enrolled in the program is eligible to have any past due balance forgiven. Importantly for Chicago's low-income homeowners, this initiative effectively ends the City's long-time practice of shutting off water supply due to a resident's inability to pay. For more information on how to qualify for the Billing Relief Program and other debt relief reform programs enacted by Mayor Lightfoot, residents are encouraged to visit [www.chicago.gov/newstartchicago](http://www.chicago.gov/newstartchicago)

### **Fair Workweek**

Chicago's workers will for the first time receive the benefits of a predictable schedule starting July 1, 2020. Mayor Lightfoot's [landmark and expansive legislation](#) will provide relief to hundreds of thousands of workers by ensuring fair scheduling policies for workers in the following industries: Building Services; Healthcare; Hotels; Manufacturing; Restaurants; Retail; and Warehouse Services. Starting July 1, employees earning no more than \$26/hour or \$50,000/year for an employer in those industries with more than 100 employees (250 for a non-profit or restaurant) will be covered by the ordinance. These employees will be guaranteed ten days advance notice of their schedule, along with the right to decline scheduling changes and receive compensation if changes do occur. They will also benefit from the right to decline work schedule hours that are less than ten hours after the end of the previous day's shift; the right to request a modified work schedule; and first choice for additional work hours when available.

### **Minimum Wage**

On July 1, 2020, hundreds of thousands of Chicagoans will get a raise. On that day, Chicago's minimum wage will increase to \$14 an hour, reaching \$15 an hour by 2021, four years before the State of Illinois. Furthermore, [Mayor Lightfoot's landmark Minimum Wage Ordinance](#) will extend minimum wage protections to numerous groups that were previously exempt. Beginning July 1, 2020, youth under the age of 18 and employees in "Learners" and Subsidized Transition Employment Programs will be covered for the first



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time, receiving a raise to \$10 an hour on the path to \$15 an hour by 2024. Also on July 1, the minimum wage for tipped workers will increase to \$8.40 an hour, 60 percent of the minimum wage.

“With Fair Workweek policies coming into effect and the Minimum Wage moving towards \$15 an hour, 2020 will be a momentous year for Chicago’s workers,” said BACP Commissioner Rosa Escareno. “Employees across the City will see more money in their pockets and greater flexibility in their schedules, improving the quality of life for hundreds of thousands of Chicago’s workers.”

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